

## Collections Advisory Committee

Statewide Collections Strategy

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## Committee Members

- Hon. Philip D. Schaefer, 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court, Kalamazoo County – Chair
- Hon. Craig D. Alston, 74<sup>th</sup> District Court, Bay County
- Hon. Paul H. Chamberlain, Isabella County Trial Court
- Hon. Alton T. Davis, 46<sup>th</sup> Circuit Trial Court, Crawford, Kalkaska and Otsego Counties

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## Committee Members

- Mr. Michael J. Dillon, Court Administrator, 12<sup>th</sup> District Court, Jackson County
- Hon. Julie A. Nicholson, 52<sup>nd</sup> District Court, Rochester Hills, Oakland County
- Hon. Michael F. Skinner, Eaton County Probate Court
- Hon. David L. Stowe, Grand Traverse County Probate Court

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## Top Priority

- Enforcing court-ordered financial sanctions
  - Judiciary's credibility
  - Judiciary's responsibility

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## Judiciary's Credibility

Courts must send the public a firm and consistent message that their orders will be enforced.

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## Judiciary's Responsibility

- To assure victims are made whole
- To share its burden of fiscal responsibility

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## Committee charged with:

Developing a statewide strategy for improving the enforcement and collection of court-ordered financial sanctions.



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## Strategy was to include:

- Methods to promote cultural change
- Data collection
- Training needs of judges and court staff
- Identification and implementation of cost-effective collections practices

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## Collections Surveys

Response rate exceeded 95% overall!



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## Survey Results and Interim Report

- No uniform system of standards for reporting outstanding receivables
- No standard practices for writing off uncollectible debt
- Significant number of courts do not have written collections policies

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## Survey Results and Interim Report

- Private sector is under utilized in collections efforts in Michigan
- District courts pay closer attention to delinquent accounts than other courts
- Intergovernmental officials and agencies share collection responsibilities with circuit courts, often across county lines

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## Survey Results and Interim Report

- Courts would like to see:
  - Increased training programs for judges and court staff
  - Acquisition and use of better technological tools
- Enhanced court rule and statutory authority for better collections practices

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## Survey Results and Interim Report

- A surprising number of courts do not utilize the authority of MCR 1.110
- Significant number of courts still utilize a combination of automated and manual systems for monitoring outstanding receivables

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## Arizona Judiciary

- Faced a funding crisis in the early part of the decade
- Beginning stages of developing an efficient collections system for their courts that are the equivalent of district courts in the state of Michigan

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## Statewide Strategy

Strategy approved by the Michigan Supreme Court on June 2, 2005.



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## Statewide Strategy

One size does not fit all!



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## Implementation Schedule

### Phase 1 – 6-12 months

- Update policy
- Refine standard report and establish reporting requirements
- Define and implement communication strategy
- Develop and implement technical support and training

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## Implementation Schedule

### Phase 2 – 6-12 months from end of Phase 1

- Voluntary participants who could serve as mentor courts
- Refine policy and systems, identify best practices throughout the State
- Communication and education for jurisdictions not in the initial (voluntary) implementation
- Develop plan for statewide implementation

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## Implementation Schedule

### Phase 3 – 1-2 years from end of Phase 2

- Statewide implementation
- Collections Advisory Committee will continue to guide and review pilots and implementation

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## Questions

- Beth Barber, Trial Court Collections Project Manager
  - 517-373-5895
  - [BarberB@courts.mi.gov](mailto:BarberB@courts.mi.gov)
- Lori DeMember, Auditor
  - 517-373-3122
  - [DeMemberL@courts.mi.gov](mailto:DeMemberL@courts.mi.gov)

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